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Gallery and Studio

WILLIAM ANDERSON COFFIN.



THE subject of the present notice, whose features are happily reproduced in the accompanying portrait, is one of the most talented of our younger American painters. His work shows marked individuality, especially in that out-of-doors, in which we find genuine feeling for the

beauties of nature, expressed with broad, effective technic. Mr. Coffin's "Moonlight in Harvest," which won the second Hallgarten prize last year at the National Academy Exhibition, was a successful rendering of a difficult effect. It is in the field of landscape, we think, that this young artist should look for future laurels, although that he has claims for recognition in genre painting probably no one would deny who has seen his clever little study of a "partie de billard," in Mr. Thomas B. Clarke's gallery; and this was one of his early efforts.

Mr. Coffin is not yet thirty-three years old. Born in Alleghany City, Pa., he was graduated from Yale in 1874. In a desultory way he drew from the cast in the art school connected with the college, and was thus led to take up drawing seriously. In 1877 he went to Paris, where, after some months' study from the antique, he passed two years in the atelier of Bonnat. A view of the life school at work there was the subject of his first picture in the Paris Salon, to which he also contributed in 1880 and 1882. Mr. Coffin returned to Bonnat's atelier for a while after a brief stay in America, and is now established in New York. He is a member of the Society of American Artists, is favorably known as an art instructor, and has written for the daily press.

TALKS WITH ARTISTS.

IV.—RECOLLECTIONS OF MR. W. A. COFFIN OF BONNAT'S LIFE SCHOOL.

"We place too much stress on what the master can do for us over here," said Mr. W. A. Coffin. "After all, we have to learn to see for ourselves and to put down with our own hands what we see."

"I joined Bonnat's studio in the spring of 1878, and was with him altogether three years. He was then at the height of his reputation. He was supposed to criticise twice a week, but sometimes he didn't come for three weeks."

"I had been making some studies during the summer, and when the studio opened I had them ready to show to Bonnat and get his advice about a picture. I waited three weeks, and as he didn't come I took them to his private studio and explained my reasons, venturing to remark I had been waiting three weeks."

"Three weeks!" he laughed. "That is nothing; sometimes le père Cogniet* didn't come for a year."

"What was the direction of Bonnat's criticism?"

"At first it was confined to but two or three points. In black and white he considered form, proportion, and movement. No man was supposed to touch color until he had acquired fair skill in drawing. Or if he did he was careful not to show it to Bonnat."

* His own master, under whom many of the great French painters of our day studied.

"In criticising studies in color, Bonnat concerned himself principally with values. You might paint flesh in a bluish, reddish or yellowish tone and he wouldn't speak of it, simply because he didn't pretend to set up the way he saw color as a standard for another."

"Still, did it not have its influence?"

"In all our class there was but one man who deliberately imitated Bonnat's painting. He did, but the influence over there is dead set against everything of that sort. Masters are very careful to respect individualities, and not to impose their own."

"When greater proficiency was made, and the important things placed on a firm foundation, Bonnat considered the work more in detail. Still there was not much latitude and longitude in his criticism. He said the same thing to me for three months at a time, throwing in now and then a little encouragement."



WILLIAM ANDERSON COFFIN. DRAWN BY HIMSELF.

"How was the studio managed?"

"Very much like all life classes. There were forty men in the morning class and sixty in the night class. The model stood on a platform, and we were ranged around in a semicircle five rows deep. The first row sat on low, straw-covered stools, with low easels. These were graduated, and the hindmost row was perched on high stools."

"How was the choice of seats determined; for there was evidently choice?"

"The men were divided into series of ten, and every Monday morning each series in rotation had the choice of seats."

"The pose, as is usual, was voted on by the students, and until after the third hour of the Monday sitting the pose could always be changed by a vote. The pose was for never less than an hour, with ten minutes' rest, and the sitting four hours. The same pose was kept for a week."

"The massière took charge of everything, paid expenses, engaged models. We paid him our fees and he was supposed to render an account once a year, and although I don't think it ever was done in the three years I was there, everything was satisfactory."

"In the afternoon we had a class of our own; then we could paint or draw as we chose, and submit our work to Bonnat in his morning visits. Although this was our own affair, if Bonnat found a man painting whose drawing was defective, he usually told him to go back to his drawing, with a remark that 'he didn't know enough to paint yet.'"

"As Bonnat received nothing for his services, his only interest in us or the studio was on its artistic side. Still, when we thought it a good joke to burlesque the fête of the 30th of May, in honor of the Republic, by some comic cartoons placed on the walls outside, and

illuminations in the daytime, he wrote a note saying that he should not visit the studio again until amends were made. This was not because of any cherished political opinions, but because he deemed it undignified and unworthy."

"Personally, he was very friendly to the men of his class. We occasionally visited him at his house, when his treatment was not only friendly but comrade-like. He always impressed us as a sturdily honest man, with no more pretension in the day of his success than he might have had as a student. His charm was in his simplicity."

MADAME DE CASSIN'S PICTURES.

IN an immense mansion, fitted up in perfect taste, at the head of the Champs Elysée, facing the Arc de Triomphe, lives alone the wealthy and cultivated Mme. de Cassin, owner of one of the choicest collections of ancient and modern paintings in Paris. The number of her visitors is very limited, so that when, a year or so ago, she sent her pictures to the Petit gallery for exhibition for the benefit of the Société Philanthropique, the event aroused great interest in artistic circles, which was enhanced by the well-founded rumor that Mme. de Cassin at her death intended to leave to the Louvre the pick of the collection.

There were fifty pictures, admirably hung, each sufficiently isolated by surrounding wall-space to enable it to be seen to the full advantage of its tone and coloring. The insurance policy was for \$600,000, which would give to each picture an average value of \$12,000. At the end of the room, in the

place of honor, was Regnault's "Salomé," standing out triumphantly on its yellow background. Salomé with her long black curly hair framing her sensual face looks happy. She is a pure animal, this Salomé, as she sits there presenting with a smile her ferocious request to Herod. The daughter of Herodias is supposed to have just finished her dance; she lets fall to the ground her veil of gauze embroidered with gold like her skirt, and with the basin and knife on her knees, she says: "Give me the head of John the Baptist here on this salver." A curtain of yellow silk, on which the sun is shining brilliantly, brings into strong relief the intense blackness of her hair, and the diaphanous, polished skin, and adds greatly to the strangeness of the picture. The expression of Salomé's face—"poodle-happy," so to speak, at the success of her dancing—the caressing shyness of her eyes, the wonderful animation of the face on this triumphant yellow background, make the picture fascinating in the



"SALOMÉ." BY HENRI REGNAULT.

IN THE COLLECTION OF MADAME DE CASSIN. (SEE PAGE 75.)

highest degree. It remains—excepting, perhaps, the portrait of Prim—Regnault's masterpiece.

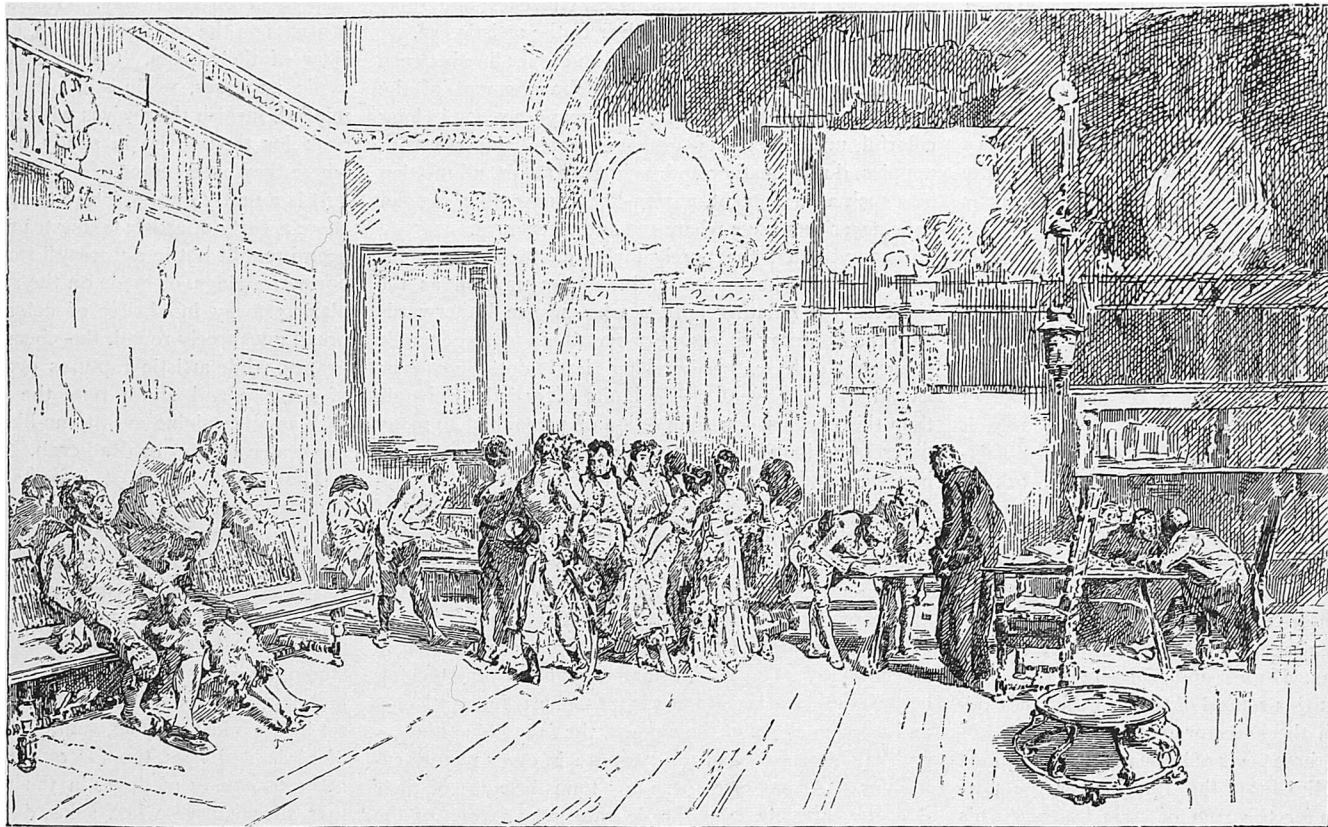
Regnault found the type of Salomé in the Roman Campagna, but it was slowly and without any preconceived idea that he came to produce the picture as it now is. At first he simply made a study from nature of the head of the model whose strangeness struck him deeply. The model afterward served Marcello (Mme. de Colonna) for her "Pythie." Regnault next added a bust, but the picture was still only a portrait, with a background of red hangings with blue flowers, and bore the title "Study of an African Woman;" then by changing the back-

ground from red to yellow, by joining on a piece of canvas on the right, on the left, and at the bottom, the seams of which are visible on close examination, and by

daughter of Herodias; she is there seated on a coffer inlaid with ivory, waiting. With an idle hand she plays with the chased poignard which is to cut off John the

thing savage and lascivious in the smile; the eyes are ferocious and voluptuous; the hair, abundant, tangled, rebellious, excessive, and black as a crow's wing, stands

out in violent contrast against the white carnations of the face—which, by the way, have faded and sunk in considerably—and against the hangings of lemon yellow of the most brilliant and luminous tonality, which form the background of the picture, and, being without folds and without shadows, envelop Salomé, as it were, in a triumphant aureole. The eminent critic, M. Paul Mantz, has pointed out the marvellous art with which Regnault has brought out the carnations in such a man-

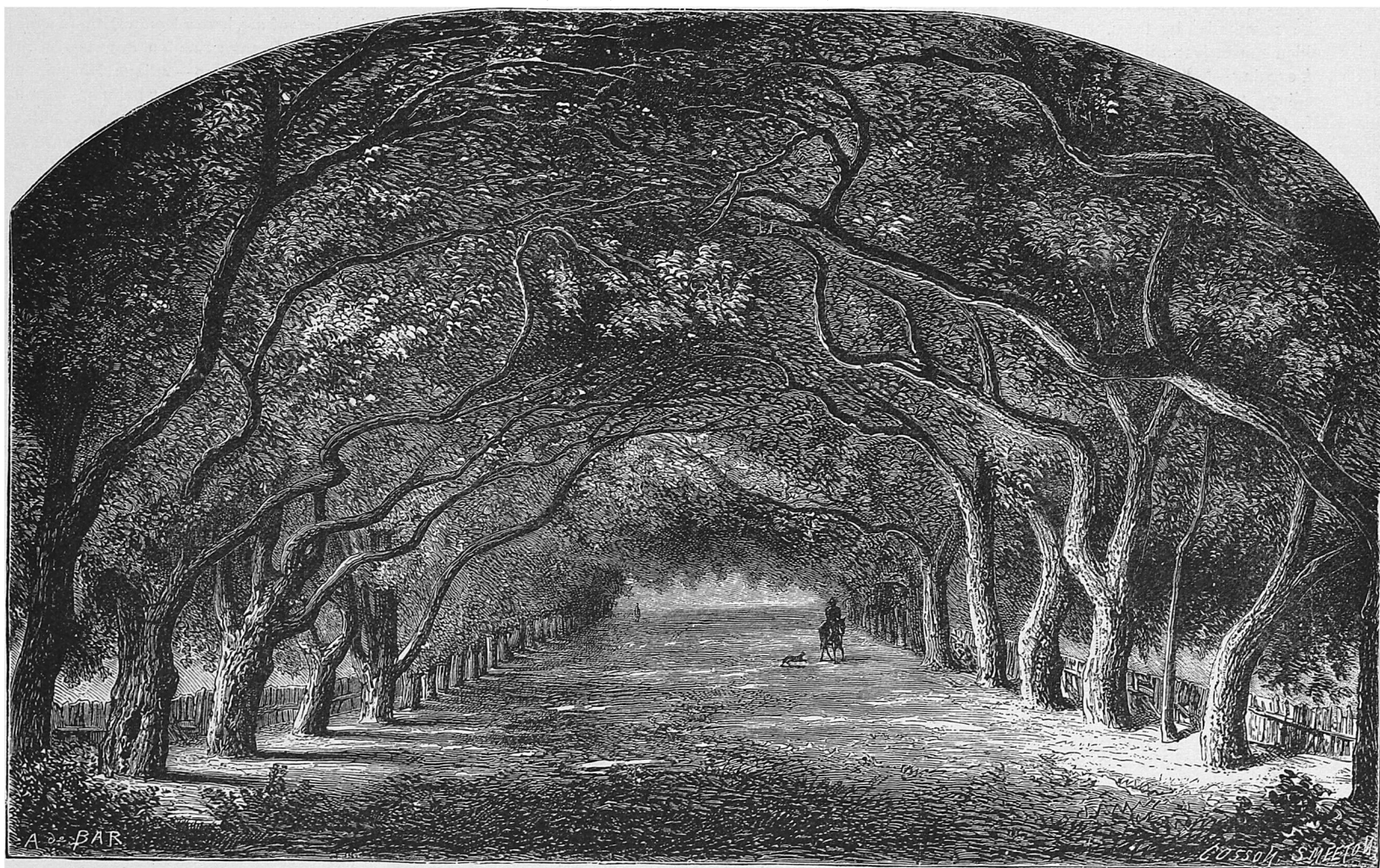


"THE SPANISH MARRIAGE." BY FORTUNY.

IN THE COLLECTION OF MADAME DE CASSIN.

Baptist's head; on her knees she holds the instruments of death, and the basin in which she will offer the bleeding head to her uncle, Herod Antipas; but, in spite of

ner that they remain luminous even on the implacable splendor of the yellow background; how he has married the absolute blackness of the hair with the bright masses



"THE CHESTNUT AVENUE." BY THEODORE ROUSSEAU.

IN THE COLLECTION OF MADAME DE CASSIN.

surrounding the bust with carefully-chosen accessories, he finally produced the composition to which he gave the title of Salomé. The gypsy girl had become the

all these preparations and projects, she is without thought—like an animal. There is no expression in that face, full almost of bestiality, except a provoking look with some-

of color of the dress and accessories; how, with exquisite fineness, the transparent golden hue is painted over the roseate flesh and harmonized with the brilliant stuff of

the background; how the face preserves its value; and how, in this painting where everything is contrast, and where the harmony extends from extreme brightness to extreme darkness, there is not a single obtrusive patch. The whole picture is bathed in an atmosphere of incomparable limpidity; it is a symphony of colors, an eternal delight and marvel for the eye. The canvas is still in the black ebony frame in which it figured at the Salon of 1870, where, after eleven ballots, the jury finally awarded it an ordinary medal. With time the picture has lost the dazzling brilliancy which led many critics to declare it to be a mere "tour de force;" on the other hand it has gained in strength and harmonious suppleness.

In order to complete the history of this great work I will give the details of its sale. When Regnault revealed his talent with his picture of "Judith and Holophernes," in 1869, a well-known Parisian dealer, M. Brame, immediately went to Spain, where Regnault was, and made a contract to buy all his work for a certain number of years. He bought the Salomé, without having seen it—for the picture was at Rome—for 12,000 francs, Regnault having spoken of it with enthusiasm as a work on which he founded great hopes. It next passed into the hands of M. Durand-Ruel, who sold it to M. Edwards for 36,000 francs, and subsequently to its present owner, Mme. de Cassin, for 60,000 francs.

Another great picture in this collection is Rousseau's "Avenue de Chataigniers," refused at the Salon of 1837. Thoré, Diaz, Dupré and Eugène Delacroix were so indignant at this refusal of the jury that they began to intrigue with the Director of the Department of Fine Arts, and after three years of insistence they obtained an order from the Minister of the Interior for the purchase of the picture for the sum of 2000 francs. This order came too late, and the state never possessed the "Avenue de Chataigniers." It was successively bought by M. Casimir-Perier for 2000 francs; by M. Worms de Romilly, in 1848, for 960 francs; by MM. Brame and Durand-Ruel for 10,000 francs; by Khalil Bey for 15,000 francs, and by Mme. de Cassin for 27,000 francs. Side by side with this splendid work was the view of the chain of the Alps, taken from the heights of the Faucille. Then there are Fortuny's masterpiece, "The Spanish Marriage," a magnificent Corot, "Solitude," representing a female figure in a pose of extreme gracefulness reclining by the edge of a lake surrounded by trees, with, in the background, a golden sunset just a little obscured by the rising shades of evening—four Meissoniers, "La Vedette," "A Man Reading," "A Man in Black Smoking," and a "Louis XIII. Cavalier Sleeping"—all excellent specimens; two superb works by Diaz: "Le Dos," a back view of a nude female figure seated leaning against a tree, and "Les Confidences de l'Amour," representing a young woman, half covered with a light white drapery, seated at the water's edge, and listening to the confidences of three little cupids fluttering around her ears. Delacroix is represented by the "Massacre de l'Evêque de Liège," and by three fine souvenirs of the artist's journey in Morocco, "L'equitation," "Une halte," and "An Arab Chief." Eugène Fromentin is represented in the collection by one of his most elegant and poetical compositions, "An Arab Encampment." A tribe of Arabs have pitched their tents on the plain; the day is rapidly waning; the stars are almost visible, and some of the Arabs are already sleeping in groups in front of the tents; at intervals fires are seen burning, and in the foreground a young girl draped in a clinging blue robe is caressing the mane of a horse, while other women and horses are indicated in the background. This picture is full of calmness and repose, and of incomparable delicacy of sentiment.

I have not space to mention in detail all the pictures comprised in this most choice and interesting collection: works of Jules Dupré, Decamps, Ricard, Daubigny, Leibl, Hébert, De Nittis, and by the old masters, Rembrandt, Van Mieris, Teniers, Rubens, etc. I will conclude by simply remarking that many of the pictures which form the gems and jewels of Mme. de Cassin's collection are works which, thirty, and even twenty years ago, were ridiculed, not understood, refused by the intolerant wisdom of Salon juries, and sold by the artists almost literally for a crust of bread, witness Delacroix's "Massacre of the Bishop of Liège." Even fourteen years ago the critics found spots on the sun of "Salomé." The conclusion to be drawn from this, a conclusion very flattering for our generation, is that we have made immense progress in that most complex and delicate quality, taste. It is safe to say that, nowadays, no artist of real merit remains unrecognized.

THEODORE CHILD.

AN ARTISTS' COUNTRY.

As all the world knows, the cool Norman country is much beloved of artists. Its outlines are so suave, its color so subtle, its fishermen and peasants both picturesque and quaint, its farmhouses, churches and ruins apples of gold in pictures of silver to the artistic eye.

Especially a favorite is the sea and river line between Honfleur and Trouville at the debouchement of the Seine into the sea, where the landscape sweeps in long colorful undulations of orchards, grainfields red with poppies, dusky heather and wide gray sands, all melting into such an iridescent, pigeon-breast ensemble of color as is never seen save where sea and river meet.

It may be that the purely idyllic character of the region touches the spirits and manners as well as the work of the painting hordes who swarm hitherwards with the February violets. For certainly a more generally decorous, orderly, hardworking host does not exist within the somewhat vague limits of artistic Bohemia than this curious conglomeration of persons of so many different nationalities, all speaking one language more or less well, and all posed in one reverential attitude before nature. "Bohemia," as understood in the argot of Paris ateliers and the pandemonium of l'École des Beaux Arts, does not exist here, and must be sought rather in wild auberges of the forest of Fontainebleau and rustic inns known chiefly of long-haired young Gauls.

The quaintness of the Norman peasantry all picture lovers know. The tall Norman caps of woven stocking cotton, the dark jackets or sacques, short, full petticoats and wooden shoes of the women, the faded blue blouses and flat-topped caps of the men, are in every picture exhibition. Artists love these low tones because of their delicate harmony with the delicate gray greens of the landscape, or as means of sculptural shadow against the glory of sea and sky. As to the Norman fisher, he is a picture in himself, largely bitumen, and with mellow richness rather than brilliancy of effect, while the Norman shepherd in rags and unspeakable dirt, outlined against opalescent sea and sky, is a thing to dream of in the dark watches of the night.

In the present widely spread "Decorative Revival," many of the picturesque features of Normandy are not preserved by the natives, but imitated by summer visitors. Thus several well-to-do Paris artists have built summer cottages here, imitated exactly from the aboriginal farmhouses. One having occasion to destroy and rebuild an ancient weedy wall, filled the interstices of the new one with soil in which were mixed seeds of weeds and running vines. No one would ever suspect this venerable-looking affair to be the parvenu it is of only yesterday. Norman churches, stern and grim, are often met with in this neighborhood, the later Gothic seldom appearing outside of towns. They lift their massive walls upon many a hilltop, and one comes upon them sometimes mildewing deep in weedy tangle and coarse thickets where once pious feet made frequent way, but where now only stray cattle and more frequent artists ever break the solitude.

Few familiar with the picture exhibitions of Europe and America but can recall the quaint twelfth-century little church of Crique-Boeuf, which exercises such a fascination over artists that all summer long it is ensphered with easels, like a huge emerald set in a fantastically carved rim.

The monastic orders of the Middle Ages scattered ruins here for our generation to paint, and so did those lawless freebooters whom we may thank that within a few hours' jaunt of Honfleur are the remains of at least three feudal castles in which Harold took the oath to Duke William!

When all else fails, peasant, fisher, shepherd cottage, church, ruin, there remain always—cows!

The cows of Normandy are of more importance to the modern world than the Farnese bull or the cow of Myron. Cattle painters swarm upon them from the hither and thithermost parts of the earth, and the pastures break out every year in a profuse eruption—a sort of cow-pox—of sketching umbrellas and marvellous head-gear rushing hither and yon, because other and bovine eruptions refuse to stand still long enough to be painted.

In the dewy morning hours one sees strange animals creeping out from all sorts of mysterious lairs. They emerge from dusky lanes leading one would have sworn no whither, but for this proof that a sleeping place is hidden somewhere in their depths. They come from thicket-hidden peasant cot and orchard-girdled farm, wild-looking animals with square wooden backs and all

sorts of painting-convenience protuberances deforming them from top to toe. The manner of this host's living is various. Some live conventionally in the hotels of Honfleur, Villerville and Trouville, walking to their work every morning, or trusting to some passing charrette to help them on their way. Others rough it among the peasants on the solid gray bread, cabbage soup and hard cider of their hosts. Others again take "pension" in rustic auberges, while still others, more economically minded, furnish themselves with a charcoal furnace and cook for themselves in shady nooks of the orchards where they have rooms.

It is a pretty gypsy picture to see sometimes upon the shore a party of artists taking tea together. The tea has been brought hot in a "cosey" from somebody's neighboring lodgings, or made on the spot over a spirit lamp, blazing away in shelter of color box. The buttered bread goes freely round, the cheering cups breathe fragrance, while artistic raptures over changing "effects" of sea, sky and shore rend the tranquil air, mingled with small feminine and Sterne-like whimpers over passing beaten donkey or dead crab.

The oldest and most important of the permanent studios is that of our own countryman, Hennessy. This studio is the rallying point for all American painters, as well as English, for many and many a mile around, and is recognized as the mainstay and support of "l'École de Pennedepie," with its satellite studios around that central permanent one changing every year. It is a dream of a studio, an ideal of one, that spacious straw-thatched building, with its entrance arch of Gloire de Dijon roses, set in the midst of quiet, sunny garden. Only the sound of birds and bees, the far off-laughter of a child, the amorous cooing of doves in the thatch break the summer silence, save when solos, duos, trios, quartettes of fellow-artists descend upon it and waken perfumed echoes to brisk transatlantic or transchannel speech. The studio is some rods away from the stately Manor of which it is an adjunct, and hidden from it by high vine-clad walls. Its front faces this shut-in garden, which is an isle of sunshine amid a sea of green, while its rear window takes in a view to drive our home-staying artists mad—a view of shining seas, of bosky heather-tinted hills, and valley of velvet set with mossy old Norman mill, ancient Norman church, quaint peasant cots, and stately chateau crowning hills. The studio walls are lined with prizes of art, here a Romney, there a Sir Joshua, "picked up" in strange London deserts—as prizes are really sometimes picked up—antique Norman armoires beautifully carved, sculptured "bahuts," curious peasant pottery and costumes, beaten brass and wrought iron, with exquisite sketches of peasant genre and Norman landscape mingled with "bits" from the easels of brother artists, famous and unknown, from one end of Europe to the other.

One summer Carleton Wiggins pitched his painter's camp here, and took many a Norman cowscape home with him to the New York exhibitions. Scarcely a cow in the neighborhood does not remember Foxcroft Cole and the persistence with which he invaded their ruminant repose summer after summer. Frank Millet painted here one summer, living in a queer little chalet, so close upon the sea that high tides looked in at the front door. He was followed in this chalet by Mark Fisher, who also stood ill with the bovine community, which more than once indicated to him that his room was better than his company in their meadows. Homer Martin lived here permanently and picturesquely in a ghostly house of untold centuries in age, with the waves leaping in at the windows. Frank Boggs one summer was Homer Martin's nearest neighbor, and here every year, bowing down before high Norman thatched eaves, like some worshipper of a fading faith, may be seen the sombre form and dark, Spanish face of Alfred Copeland.

MARGARET BERTHA WRIGHT.

A LESSON IN PASTEL-PAINTING.

THE beautiful art of pastel-painting commends itself especially to amateurs for many reasons. In the first place an excellent effect is gained with comparatively little labor. Then, the method of working is simple and quickly learned by practical experience. No great skill is required to produce a highly finished picture, and the exquisite colors now obtainable are almost bewildering in their number and variety. Many persons object to the smell of oil-paints, or to the tedium of acquiring the